to give concerted and special attention to the languishing craft of weaving.

Problems of Opium Growers

4915. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Will the Minister of FIINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems of the opium growers in the country;

(b) whether there has been a sharp fall in opium production in the country in general and Jhaiawar region of Rajasthan in particular;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the main problems being faced by the opium growers; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to solve their problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) During 1990–91, opium production in the country including that in Jhalawar region of Rajasthan had fallen marginally as compared to previous years.

(c) The fall in production of opium was on account of damage caused to poppy crop by mohilla disease and rains, etc. The main problem being faced by the opium growers is that due to crop damage some cultivators fell short of the minimum qualifying yield required for renewal of their licences.

(d) While formulating the policy guidelines relating to grant of licences for poppy cultivation for the year 1991–92, the Government has taken into account the damage caused to the poppy crop during the previous year. The minimum qualifying yield for grant of licence has not been increased but retained at the level of previous year. Further, the cultivators, in whose villages there was widespread/some damage to poppy crop during 1990–91 due to pests and rains, etc. and where such damage was reported and verified by the departmental officers, have been made eligible for grant of licences for 1991–92 even if they had tendered less than the qualifying yield. In addition to these measures and to ensure that cultivators are not delicensed due to marginal shortfalls in the qualifying yield, instructions have been issued to the Narcotics Commissioner of India to condone shortfalls in yield upto 500 grammes per hectare.

Central Assistance to States

4916. SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have released the central assistance to any States without getting the conditions laid down for release of grant fulfilled by those States;

(b) if so, the names of those States and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to release grants to other States also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) Normal Central assistance is released to the States for financing their Annual Plans in monthly instalments to be adjusted at the end of the year on the basis of statement of anticipated expenditure on the States, Annual Plans to be furnished by the State Governments. In addition, additional Central assistance is released to the State Governments for externally aided projects on the basis of reimbursements made by external agencies. No